



## Understanding the Basics of Summer Meal Programs

During the school year, 21 million children receive free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch. But when school is out, many of the children relying on these school meals, go hungry. Summer meal programs help close that gap. Summer meals give children the nutrition they need so they are ready to learn when they return to school.

Go to [USDA and Partner Resources](#).

### What are the Summer Meal Programs?

Summer meals are the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the National School Lunch Program. They are federally-funded, State-administered programs that provide nutritious meals to children in low-income areas during the months when school is not in session.

- **State agencies** communicate and receive funding through USDA to administer summer meal programs.
- **Sponsors** communicate with the State agency to run the programs. Potential sponsors include schools, local government agencies, camps, and faith-based and other non-profit community organizations that have the ability to manage a food service program. While responsible for the operation of summer meal sites, sponsors also must ensure access to meals is available and known to eligible children in their communities.
- **Sites**, the places in the community where children receive meals, work directly with sponsors. Sites may be located in a variety of safe and supervised settings, including schools, parks, community centers, churches, camps, and migrant centers. A smoothly run site is something that every sponsor and site operator hopes to achieve. The key is an organized, well-supervised program that meets the goal of providing fresh, well-balanced meals that are appealing to children.





- **SFSP** reimburses sponsors for serving meals to children that meet Program requirements. Sponsors may receive reimbursement for serving up to two meals. Camps or sites that primarily serve migrant children may be approved to serve up to three meals.
- **SSO** offers a streamlined approach for schools to continue to serve meals to children at community sites by following the same meal service rules and procedures used during the regular school year.

## Have Questions?

Get answers to the most commonly asked questions about summer meals:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/frequently-asked-questions-faqs>

Check out this video that quickly explains what the summer meal programs are all about:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkLGT0fRr8w>

## USDA Resources

### Webinars

Recorded webinars are available online along with the corresponding presentations. The webinars cover a wide range of topics, from *Engaging Youth Volunteers to Make Your Summer Site the Talk of the Town*:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/2014-summer-meals-webinars>

### Handbooks

SFSP guidance is available to help explain all Program requirements for sponsors and sites:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/handbooks>



## Summer Meals Toolkit

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



## Partner Organization Resources

### Food Research and Action Center

#### FRAC Facts: The Summer Food Service Program

For some quick facts on the summer meals program, check out:

[http://frac.org/pdf/sfsp\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](http://frac.org/pdf/sfsp_fact_sheet.pdf)

## For Additional Information

Review these ideas and adopt the strategies that seem reasonable to you and compatible with your Program. For additional questions, sponsors and the general public should contact their State agency for help. State agencies should contact their FNS Regional Office.

List of FNS Regional Offices: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>

List of State Agencies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>

*USDA and its recipient institutions share responsibility for compliance and oversight to ensure good stewardship of Federal funds.*



### Summer Meals Toolkit

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*